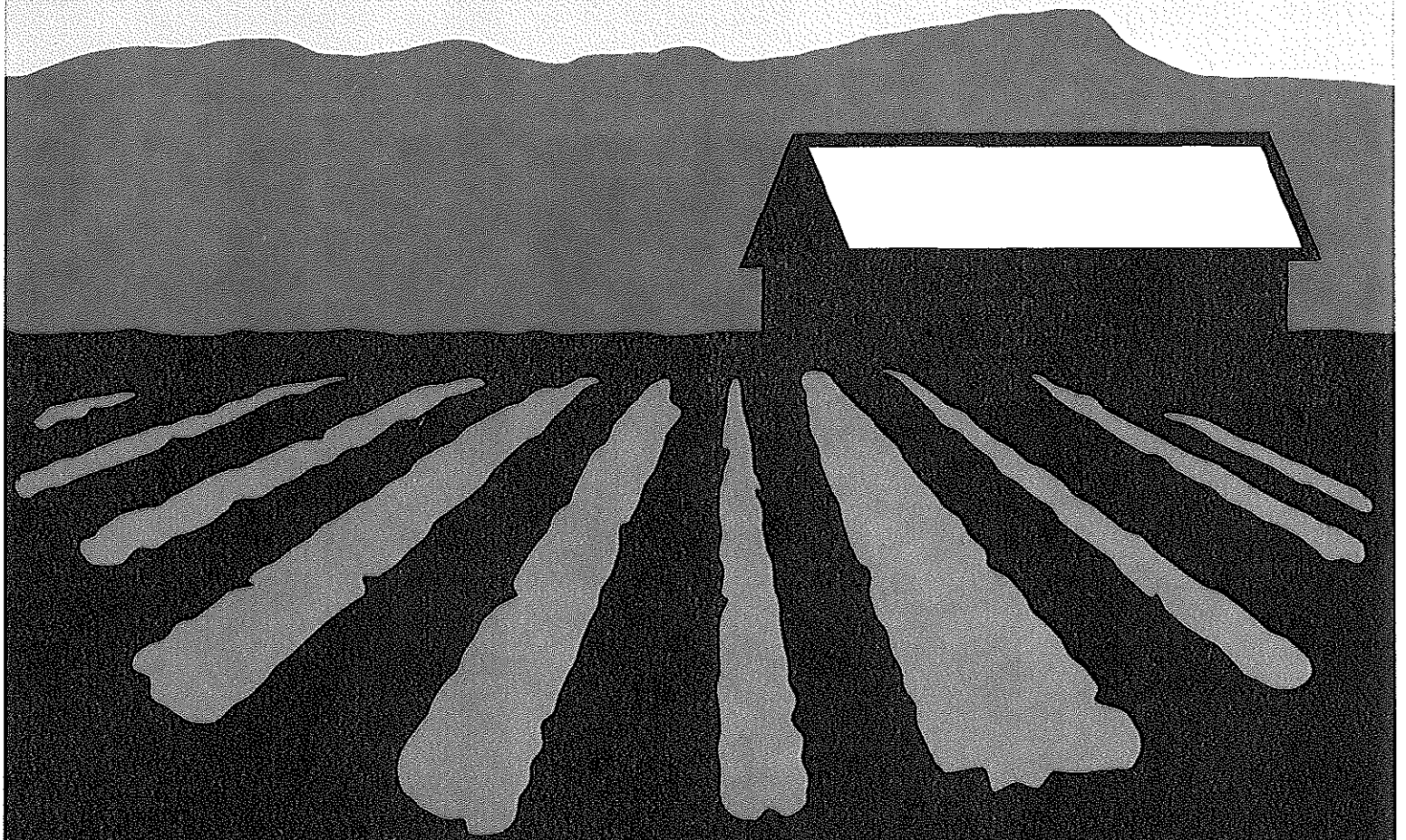


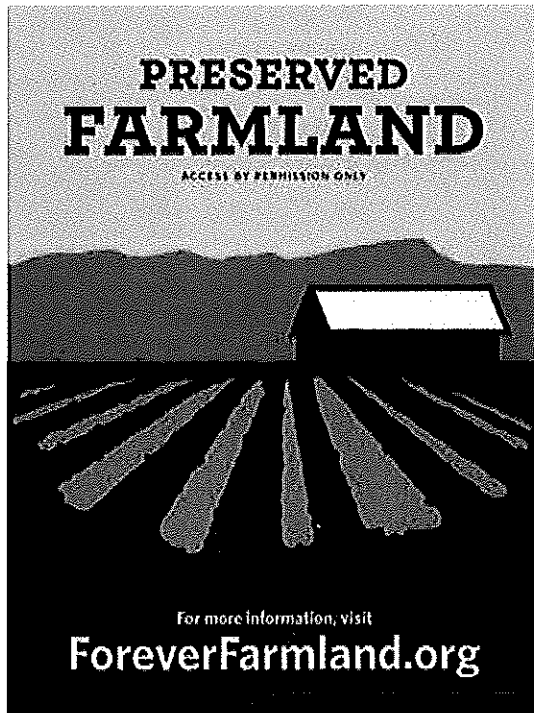
PRESERVED FARMLAND

ACCESS BY PERMISSION ONLY



For more information, visit

ForeverFarmland.org



Land Trusts Protecting Valley Farmland

[The Kestrel Trust](#)
[Franklin Land Trust](#)
[Valley Land Fund](#)
[Trust for Public Land](#)
[Trustees of Reservations](#)
[Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust](#)

MA State and Federal Programs

[APR \(Agricultural Preservation Restrictions\)](#)
[Chapter 61a](#)
[Farm Viability](#)
[Farm to School Project](#)
[Massachusetts Farm Bureau](#)
[Massachusetts NRCS](#)
[Massachusetts Dept of Conservation & Recreation](#)
[UMass Center for Agriculture](#)
[USDA Rural Development](#)

Local Farm Support Organizations

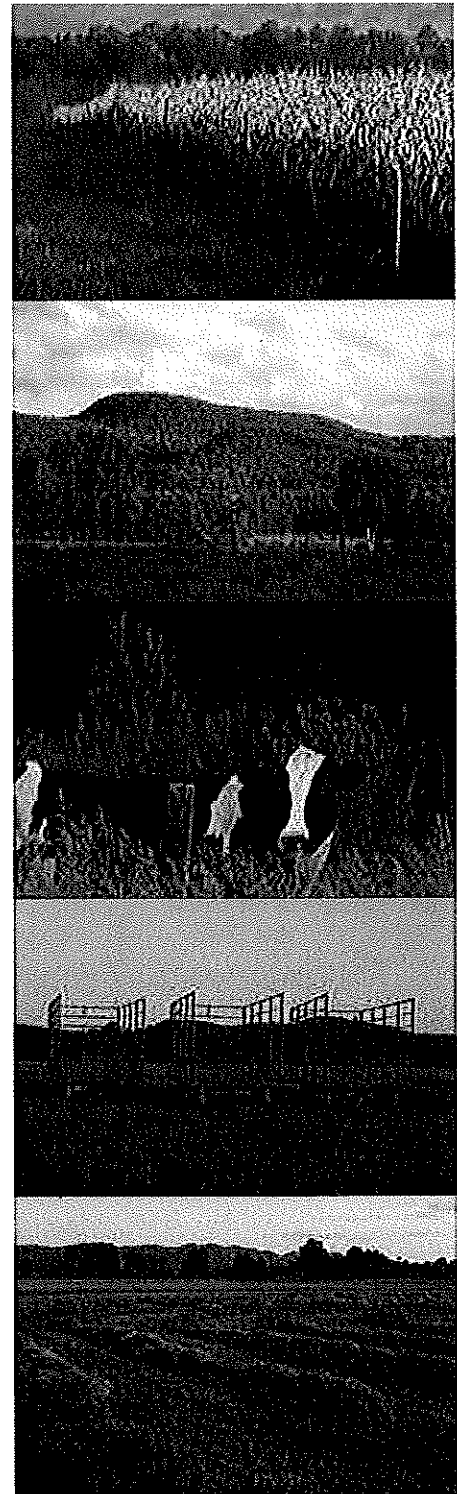
[American Farmland Trust](#)
[Land For Good](#)
[Farm Transfer Network](#)
[New England Small Farm Institute](#)
[CISA-Buy Local Food](#)
[Farm Based Education Association](#)
[NOFA Mass](#)

Other Conservation Organizations

[Pioneer Valley Planning Commission](#)
[Massachusetts Audubon Society](#)
[Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition](#)
[The Nature Conservancy](#)

The Pioneer Valley contains some of the best farmland in Massachusetts and throughout the world. In 2009, the Town of Hadley, a leading town in agricultural protection efforts, joined with [The Kestrel Trust](#), a regional land trust, to place special **Forever Farmland** signs on protected farms. Hadley has more than 2,400 acres of protected farmland. The town has contributed substantially to state APR purchases with the town's Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund. The intent of this sign project is to celebrate Hadley's agricultural heritage during [Hadley's 350th anniversary](#) year and honor landowners who have chosen to protect their land. As these new signs start to go up, we hope other farm owners throughout all the towns in the Valley will participate in raising the visibility about the importance protected local farmland.

Preserved Farmland is permanently protected by an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) or an agricultural Conservation Restriction (CR). These are legally binding restrictions monitored and enforced by the [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#), a town conservation commission, and/or a land trust.



Farmland owners voluntarily enter into these agreements by selling the APR for a negotiated price based on appraised value of the land.

The beauty and character of the Pioneer Valley is rooted in our abundant agricultural landscape. Freshly plowed fields bordered by lush green hillsides define our sense of place. The delicious local produce available at farmers markets and roadside stands allow Valley residents to become part of the landscape. However, farmland is more than just nutritionally and aesthetically important. With \$7.3 million in worker wages, and \$35 million in sales, including \$1.6 million in direct-to-consumer-sales, the financial contribution agriculture makes to Hampshire County is substantial.

The Good News:

As of 2008, 725 farms and a total land area of over 61,855 acres have been preserved by the APR program in Massachusetts. A new report from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that Massachusetts agriculture expanded from 2002 to 2007, growing by 27 percent both in crop and livestock sales and in the total number of farms.

The Bad News:

According to Massachusetts Audubon Society's 2009 report [Losing Ground](#),

Massachusetts loses 7 acres of agricultural land per day to development. Valley farmland is particularly at risk of being converted to sprawling housing subdivisions.

What You Can

Do: Pioneer Valley residents can protect farmland and support local farmers in several ways:

- Financially support the purchase of the APRs that permanently preserve farmland. Make a donation to your local land trust and advocate for your town's CPA Fund, which both provide a critical source of funding for APR program.
- Buy local farm products or join a CSA farm.
- Become a member of your local land trust and other organizations striving to sustain regional agriculture.

Dozens of organizations have had a role in permanently protecting farms in the Valley. Check out these links (to the left) to get to know the land trusts, the Massachusetts APR program, and organizations working to support farmland and

farmers. Each of these programs and organizations plays a critical part in sustaining our vibrant agricultural tradition. We encourage all Pioneer Valley residents to inform themselves about the various ways to support local agriculture, and preserve the land for future farmers, and for the future generations who will call the Valley home.

Valley Farmland

Maps:

[APR Land in the Valley](#)

[Prime Soils in the Valley](#)

Thanks to the
Massachusetts Land
Trust Coalition for
funding this project.
Photos by David
Schumacher.
